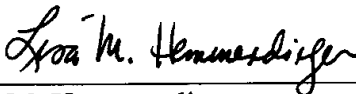


The "provisional" double patenting rejection should continue to be made by the examiner in each application as long as there are conflicting claims in more than one application unless that "provisional" double patenting rejection is the only rejection remaining in one of the applications. *If the "provisional" double patenting rejection in one application is the only rejection remaining in that application, the examiner should then withdraw that rejection and permit the application to issue as a patent*

M.P.E.P. § 804(I)(B). Applicants therefore request that the provisional double patenting rejections of claims 1-9 be withdrawn and the claims be permitted to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 26, 2002

By: 
Lisa M. Hemmendinger
Registration No. 42,653

Banner & Witcoff, Ltd.
1001 G Street, N.W., Eleventh Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001-4597
(202) 508-9100

09/982,232
000295.00008